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Diseases and deaths at Iloilo in July—Smallpox in Guimeras.

MANILA, P. I., August 20, 1900.

SIR: Relative to the mortality statistics of Iloilo and the general health conditions prevailing at that place, I have the honor to submit the following, abstracted from Asst. Surg. L. D. Frick's report:

"I have been unable to secure complete health statistics of Iloilo, but the following is a general statement of the conditions: The estimated population is about 12,000; before the bombardment by our fleet it was easily twice that, but the buildings burned then have not been rebuilt.

"The number of deaths during the month of June was 48; during July the number was 59, classed by attending physicians as follows: Malarial fever, 19; convulsions, 14; dysentery, 8; phthisis, 8; beriberi, 4; leprosy, 1; smallpox, 1.

"Beriberi has been very common among the natives, especially the native prisoners, and the mortality is high; it has, however, been confined to them until this month, when it first appeared among our soldiers.

"You do not find cases of smallpox walking the streets because of their dislike of the hospital, but they can easily be seen in all the small villages outside Iloilo.

"Hearing that there had been a case of smallpox at the pilot station, 10 miles down on Guimeras Island, I went down to investigate and found the pilot station surrounded by 6 nipa huts, in which there had been 18 or 20 deaths since the epidemic began; they were all children except 1. Measures were taken to prevent the infection of vessels taking on pilots. The natives themselves are perfectly indifferent."

Respectfully,

J. C. PERRY,

Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,

U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

PORTO RICO.

Report from Ponce.

PONCE, P. R., September 17, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith the quarantine and abstract bills of health reports for the week ended September 15, 1900: On September 11 I disinfected 1 trunk, the baggage of a passenger on steamship *Philadelphia*. The baggage had originated in Barranquilla, United States of Colombia, an infected place. Nothing else of interest has occurred.

Respectfully,

W. W. KING,

Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,

*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.**Mortality statistics of the island.*

SAN JUAN, P. R., September 15, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith mortality statistics of the island of Porto Rico. These statistics were compiled from reports made to the superior board of health by the municipal judges of the various municipalities, that is to say, from the official records. The only exception to this is the deaths reported as due to the hurricane of August 8, 1899. These figures were secured from the various alcaldes. The reason for this I do not know.

Table A is a consolidated report for a period of ten years for the entire island. The populations in this table were estimated from the returns of the Spanish census of 1887 and of the American census of 1899.

Some of the figures are surprising. Thirty deaths, for example, are attributed to yellow fever in the year 1898. The invasion of the island by American troops occurred in July of that year, and it seems to be a fact, well assured, that since that event there has not been, with one doubtful exception, a single case of this disease in Porto Rico. Seven of these 30 deaths are reported from San Juan, which was occupied by nonimmune American troops in October. Under the circumstances, it is not very easy to reconcile these statements.

The diagnosis of anæmia is rather a vague one, and I am sorry that my own limited experience in the island prevents me from speaking fully on the classes of anæmia which occur here. They are very numerous, and the most cursory observer anywhere in the island will, in a short walk, rarely fail to see several of these cases among the poorer classes.

Poor food, bad hygienic conditions, and malaria are usually urged as causes of these anæmias. And that they are factors in their production I have no doubt. Many are, however, of the pernicious type. Others, and possibly a large proportion of them, are due to the ankylostoma duodenale (See New York Medical Journal, Vol. LXXI, No. 15, Ankylostomiasis in Porto Rico—Ashford). Many are secondary to other diseases. But what proportion these various classes bear to each other I am unable to say. It is a rich and tempting field for study.

Since the hurricane of last year the number of deaths reported from intestinal diseases has greatly increased in many parts of the island. The deaths reported from dysentery in this table show a large increase for the year 1899, but also show an increase for the year 1897 as well.

Tuberculosis, of course, holds an important place, and the number of deaths from tetanus is large. This disease is quite prevalent here.

Typhoid fever, in my limited experience with diseases here, is comparatively rare, although there are types of fevers here with which I am not familiar, usually called by the native physicians typho-malarial or malarial, which much resemble anomalous forms of typhoid.

[Inclosure.]

TABLE A.—*Mortality table, island of Porto Rico.*

Diseases, etc.	1890. <i>a</i>	1891. <i>a</i>	1892. <i>a</i>	1893. <i>a</i>	1894. <i>a</i>	1895. <i>a</i>	1896. <i>a</i>	1897. <i>a</i>	1898. <i>a</i>	1899. <i>b</i>
Population.....	837, 235	850, 125	863, 015	875, 905	888, 795	901, 685	914, 575	927, 465	940, 355	953, 243
Deaths, all causes..	25, 203	22, 350	22, 271	20, 710	23, 338	24, 131	23, 081	29, 014	31, 686	37, 652
Deaths from—										
Smallpox.....	2, 362	664	61	11	372	921	472	492	522	242
Yellow fever.....	152	97	185	134	116	360	76	20	30	0
Typhoid fever....	409	369	364	331	365	337	118	405	416	346
Meningitis.....	256	227	264	297	271	314	345	369	358	370
Dysentery.....	518	367	557	405	661	969	867	1, 954	1, 913	3, 566
Diphtheria.....	44	43	44	38	50	63	43	44	67	45
Tuberculosis.....	1, 744	1, 523	1, 683	1, 705	1, 768	1, 814	1, 836	1, 933	2, 094	1, 910
Tetanus.....	986	898	1, 043	1, 013	991	950	870	794	558	1, 084
Anæmia.....	3, 451	2, 794	3, 508	3, 240	3, 448	3, 520	3, 894	4, 723	7, 469	8, 877
Percentage (<i>c</i>).....	+30.10	+26.29	-25.81	+23.64	-26.26	+26.76	-25.24	+31.28	+33.69	-39.50

a Population estimated.

b Actual population, American census.

c Percentage per 1,000 of population.

TABLE B.—Total deaths from all causes, 1899.

Municipality.	June.	July.	Aug.	αAug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Adjuntas.....	93	89	131	15	117	213	233	169	123
Aibonito.....	27	39	37	17	19	46	35	31	51
Aguada.....	38	58	61	0	85	83	71	49	b 40
Aguadilla.....	b 58	56	54	0	71	70	63	59	41
Agua-buenas.....	b 30	b 35	b 45	16	b 50	42	35	35	28
Anasco.....	60	45	61	7	65	80	93	64	66
Arecibo.....	106	132	146	403	134	201	171	138	99
Arroyo.....	13	18	20	6	22	25	17	25	14
Barranquitas.....	24	42	54	24	68	73	59	39	22
Barros.....	21	29	38	70	98	95	111	91	46
Barceloneta.....	3	26	10	2	23	18	65	60	35
Bayamon.....	b 50	48	52	10	66	85	93	98	72
Carolina.....	21	27	30	1	32	31	29	31	32
Caguas.....	53	51	25	4	76	116	110	84	66
Ciales.....	39	54	113	23	87	218	213	121	73
Camuy.....	16	28	22	0	32	52	42	21	27
Corozal.....	b 40	21	91	43	50	73	78	56	40
Cabo-rojo.....	39	47	45	0	44	43	37	49	41
Coamo.....	23	39	32	9	24	35	48	33	39
Cayey.....	37	52	94	24	56	76	77	82	54
Cidra.....	14	39	47	36	19	31	20	18	15
Comerio.....	11	19	66	40	33	46	54	60	25
Culebra.....	b 2	3	1	0	2	2	1	2	2
Dorado.....	b 6	7	10	0	14	9	18	12	5
Fajardo.....	39	30	25	0	38	30	31	40	40
Guayama.....	61	36	46	10	38	56	61	62	61
Guayanilla.....	30	19	42	35	36	54	51	52	.....
Gurabo.....	15	23	23	0	27	80	47	27	25
Hatillo.....	26	28	23	0	25	49	32	32	24
Hormigueros.....	14	12	15	1	12	b 12	b 14	b 12	b 12
Hato-grande.....	34	41	39	12	40	39	51	59	48
Humacao.....	49	43	84	43	51	67	70	91	73
Isabela.....	61	58	47	1	101	98	66	53	41
Juana-Díaz.....	84	55	102	117	70	149	139	84	89
Juncos.....	21	21	31	4	27	38	40	37	38
Lares.....	85	106	110	2	138	224	176	133	83
Las Marias.....	24	42	39	16	36	59	86	69	45
Lajas.....	37	32	25	0	14	28	28	30	34
Loíza.....	14	7	7	0	14	21	22	21	17
Manatí.....	31	39	32	0	28	46	65	56	36
Morovis.....	21	43	114	69	38	89	65	60	33
Mayaguez.....	131	161	137	36	125	158	168	202	150
Maricao.....	49	60	58	2	44	64	84	79	51
Maunabo.....	12	21	34	26	21	38	37	40	28
Moca.....	59	69	65	0	84	121	80	45	29
Naguabo.....	22	21	27	2	33	46	49	53	50
Naranjito.....	5	25	36	27	41	41	35	32	32
Patillas.....	22	29	91	20	62	47	58	71	61
Penuelas.....	29	21	28	1	37	61	51	58	43
Piedras.....	11	13	18	9	15	b 16	b 15	b 13	b 12
Ponce.....	174	137	129	281	266	254	251	273	202
Quebradillas.....	24	13	20	1	29	32	36	26	20
Río-grande.....	b 37	28	33	1	35	30	55	51	b 50
Río-piedras.....	26	27	38	1	37	58	51	32	32
Rincon.....	22	12	18	0	22	23	36	20	16
San Sebastian.....	68	51	51	0	74	95	81	55	46
Sabana-grande.....	44	33	38	0	36	49	46	44	30
San German.....	67	74	55	0	84	122	95	84	68
Salinas.....	b 17	17	16	6	18	24	20	30	21
San Juan.....	61	35	65	1	61	74	100	85	85
Santa Isabel.....	b 12	12	8	0	6	14	14	16	17
Toa-alta.....	10	12	b 19	0	.....	37	26	24	20
Toa-baja.....	b 7	6	3	0	1	15	10	11	17
Trujillo-alto.....	6	22	10	.....	30	9	11	14	17
Utüado.....	218	309	312	572	285	308	454	318	198
Vega-alta.....	12	17	20	0	25	36	31	18	13
Vega-baja.....	b 22	21	26	0	39	44	42	48	38
Yabucoa.....	19	12	19	1	15	18	18	12	11
Yabucoa.....	21	28	116	225	30	60	67	54	43
Yauco.....	b 108	b 122	b 112	8	b 139	b 197	b 223	b 185	b 140
Total.....	2,769	3,020	2,691	2,280	3,071	4,939	5,058	4,311	3,377

α Figures in this column show deaths from the hurricane of August 8, 1899.

b Figures are estimated.

Table B shows the mortality death rate of the several municipalities for the months immediately preceding and succeeding the hurricane of last year, with the number of deaths reported as directly due to the storm. It is interesting, as the hurricane is continually urged as the chief cause of the generally increased death rate of Porto Rico during the last year.

The monthly report of the superior board of health for the month of June shows the present death rate of the island. This is the first report of the kind issued by this board.

The death rate of some of the municipalities of the island has been steadily increasing during the last few months until one or two have reached rather alarming figures. This is not general, however, and there are reasons for this in the particular instances in which it occurs. Take Ponce, for example; for the month of June the total deaths reported numbered 431. This gives an annual mortality of 93.21 per 1,000 of population, and these figures will be probably larger for the month of August. Ponce has, however, for some reason, proved a Mecca for all of the poor and sick of the island who enter her limits, in many instances only to swell the death rate and increase the city's expenses for burials. So that this death rate is not in reality an accurate one. There are a few other isolated similar instances in the island.

From a cursory examination of the statistics of Porto Rico, however, it is evident that there has been a general increase in the death rate for the past year or year and a half. The cause of this is not entirely evident. There are probably a number of causes—the class of people who form a large portion of the island's population, the general and wretched poverty existing among them, continued unsettled conditions with the consequent economic disturbances, the recent invasion of the island by armed forces, and the hurricane of last year have probably all contributed to such a result. Other minor factors have also probably played a part. The internal hygienic conditions of the island are very bad, and not a great deal has been done to improve them except in a few places. The invasion of Porto Rico by some epidemic disease is not a pleasant possibility to consider.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Dr. W. F. Smith, secretary of the superior board of health, and to Mr. Leo Rosenberg, chief clerk, through whose kindness I secured the necessary data for compiling these tables.

I should have stated above that the deaths occurring among the Spanish soldiers in Porto Rico during the years of Spanish government (so I am informed by the municipal judge of San Juan) are included in these figures. The following table and comment by Major Hoff, till recently chief surgeon of this United States army department (Brigadier-General Davis's Annual Report to the Adjutant-General, 1899), may be pertinent in this connection:

The meager statistics of the Spanish army obtainable here may enable us to anticipate what our own experiences are likely to be. I find that during the last ten years yellow fever occurred among those troops as follows: 1889, 114 cases; 1890, 169 cases; 1891, 24 cases; 1892, 99 cases; 1893, 91 cases; 1894, 185 cases; 1895, 630 cases; 1896, 95 cases; 1897, no cases; 1898, no cases.

Respectfully,

C. H. LAVINDER,
*Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.,
Chief Quarantine Officer for Porto Rico.*